

THE TROLLEY RABBIT

AN EPISODE IN WOODS AND WATER EXPLOITS

By Ernest McCallie

Author of "Tenderfoot" and "Red, Hot, and Blue"

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There's more than a dozen ways of shooting rabbits, but the boys generally wait until there's snow on the ground. Of course a man runs across rabbits when he's quail shooting, hunting for fatted grouse and prairie chickens, but the real time to shoot them is along about from November until the middle of December. Then they are foraging around among the corn shocks and fattening up on different stuff, and the fat just lays in wads all up and down their backs, and their kidneys are simply smothered in tallow. Fact! You take a corn-fed rabbit in the middle of November, and he's as fat as a seal, and tender as chicken.

But that isn't what I started to tell about. The Nimrod Gun and Rod Club was composed of about as crafty

the rabbit on a steady swing around this track up and down, in and out, by sitting under the kitchen and working the dingus from down there.

Well, say, now! Didn't that tame some of the real "wise" boys? I guess yes! Every Saturday night when we'd go out to the lake we'd take some hunter along, and after the boys would get to playing "cinch" in the sitting-room, some fellow would come in sort of excited and say: "Where's my gun?" and commence to fumble around the gun rack. The fellows who were in the deal would say: "What do you want with your gun?"

Then the Nimrod would say: "There's a rabbit out in the orchard." By a little smooth work we could generally get the new arrival to dig out into the night with the full intent of destroying the rabbit; and if he was a real hunter, even he would usually take a couple of shots at the trolley rabbit before he would "catch on" to the joke. But if he was a green hand he would stand there and bang away for a dozen shots. The boys always went along and fed shells to him, and encouraged him to shoot, and after he had finally "tumbled" to the hoax, it was worth a supper next week in town.

"Big Jack" always disappeared at the psychological moment, and manipulated the pulleys, and when he came back the boys would kindly tell him all about it and imitate the actions of the shooter, and "Big Jack" would nearly perish with laughter.

One time we got word from "Jack" that he had a fresh victim in town who would be on hand the next Saturday night at the depot, and for us all to be sure to come down and meet Wilbur. This Wilbur was simply sagging in his side-pockets with money,

struck in a couple of shells in case we saw any rabbits on the way over. But Old Man Carmody put a stopper on that by declaring that the team wouldn't stand for shooting from the wagon, and so we coaxed Wilbur to keep his artillery under cover until later.

We arrived at the house and Wilbur was introduced all around and we had an elegant supper waiting for us. We showed our prospective member the gun-racks, the mounted ducks, jack-snipe, woodcock, ruffed grouse, and chickens and other specimens in the front room, which was our "show room," and then we got together in the sitting-room for another session of "cinch." Well, sir, this here Wilbur was a lucky devil at "cinch." Seems as if he got the cards, and he knew how to play 'em. He kept winning steady, and by and by he was about three dollars ahead "Buck." Swearing went out doors and after padding around in the light snow that lay on the ground, he comes in kind of sly and says: "Where'd I put my gun?"

This Wilbur fellow he'd just won a game, and "Big Jack" was abusing the cards, and "Jack" speaks up and says: "What's up, is that old eye out there, 'Buck'?"

"No," says "Buck," "but I saw a rabbit running around in the orchard, and I thought I'd run in and nail him. I win the five if I get him, don't I?" "Oh, no!" says "Big Jack," "that's for a fair start in the morning, every fellow in the timber and the dogs loose. Go ahead and get him, though. Hold on, though," says "Jack," "as a thought seemed to strike him, 'what's the matter with our new member, taking first crack at him?'"

"All right," says "Buck," "we'll both go." So "Buck" and this Wilbur boy they snakes their breech-loaders out of the cases and out they put for the rabbit. "Big Jack" ducks out of the side door and in under the kitchen and away goes the rabbit.

"There he goes," whispers "Buck," as the rabbit sails away as slick as a cash basket, and goes down the hill. "Give it to him, soak him."

So this Wilbur fellow ups with his gun and aims for the rabbit, and then he drops his gun and takes a peek, and then he raises his gun, and still he don't shoot.

"Shoot, shoot," says "Buck," "he'll get clear away if you don't hurry. What ye waitin' for?" says "Buck."

"I'm waitin' for some one to turn the power off," says this here Wilbur fellow. "I ain't shootin' any mechanical rabbits unless I get a crack at 'em settin'."

And "Big Jack" paid for that supper.

What He Wanted.

Congressman J. Hampton Moore's book, entitled, "With Speaker Cannon Through the Tropics," tells that the vessel on which the voyage was made was prevented from landing its distinguished passengers at Colon on the day of arrival because of a technical violation of the quarantine law of the Isthmus of Panama. Finally the order was issued permitting the vessel to come up to the dock.

A pilot on shore was wigwagging signals to the pilot on the "congressional junketeer" when Speaker Cannon caught sight of the strange performance. He was standing on the deck with Representative Moore at the time, and this question was addressed to the author-congressman: "What in — does that — fool want?"

"I suppose," was Mr. Moore's answer, "he is a member of the Panama congress and he is trying to catch your eye. He probably wants recognition."

Force of Habit.

"Close shave, sir?" No response. "Would you prefer the window closed?"

No response. "Getting rather cold, eh?" No response. "Trim your mustache, sir?" No response. "Think Roosevelt will accept a third term?"

No response. "Bay-ram?" No response. "Any news about the murder trial?" No response. Whereupon the country barber, who was alone in his shop, took a seat greatly refreshed. "He had been saving himself!"—Judge.

Slow.

"Jones is terribly slow pay, isn't he?" "Well I wouldn't like to say that exactly. But I will say that when it comes to paying what he owes, he appears to be a victim of stuporous melancholia."—Detroit Free Press.

The New Way.

Lives of great men all remind us if we go in for big game. We'll win out, and leave behind us smaller rascals aching time. —Baltimore American.

Evolution.

Little drops of water, Little grains of sand, Make the mighty milkman And the grocer grand. —Judge.



WHY DON'T YOU FIRE?

a bunch of fakers as ever sat up nights trying to "put it over" some unsuspecting devotee of the rod and gun. It was about an even bet that they would rather fool some fellow into doing something ridiculous than to make the record "bag" for ducks along the lakes. "Big Jack" Mullany was willing at any time to spend \$50 for something that could take in a veteran "sport." And every winter, after the shooting had closed and the boys had lots of idle time on their hands, "Big Jack" always was working on some racket that was calculated to cover some hunter with confusion and cause him to set up quantities of cigars, or buy a supper for the members of the club.

And so this particular winter "Jack" had fixed up the slickest scheme you ever heard of. The club's headquarters were at a farmhouse about a quarter of a mile from the lake, and we used to go out there as soon as there was a good snow on the ground and take some beagles along and shake the country up for rabbits. Back of the sitting-room of the farmhouse was the kitchen, and it was built high up from the ground and boarded underneath. Back of the kitchen was the orchard, and it was on a side hill, with the trees pretty low to the ground; an old orchard pretty well gone to seed.

"Big Jack," who was a clever mechanic, and an electrician besides, went out there and built a little trolley track in the orchard that ran up and down hill and around among the trees, and that worked as slick as one of these little tracks that they use to send ash back and forth on in the big stores. Well, sir, he next shot a rabbit and got it mounted all stretched out, and then he fixes the rabbit on the track and gets the wires and pulleys arranged so that he could keep

and it was figured that he would do the handsome thing by the boys when we gave him an interview with our rabbit. So a full attendance was there at the depot, and we had our four beagles along to give the meet the appearance of the genuine thing. Wilbur was there all right, and he seemed to be the most promising thing in the way of a "tenderfoot" that had been sprung in a long time.

He was just breaking into the shooting game, and "Big Jack" was helping him out and lending him books and going out shooting clay pigeons with him, and had put up his name for membership, and we all gave him the "glad hand" and prepared to hand it to him plenty when we got out to the lake.

All the way out we sat in the "smoker," and this Wilbur won about a dollar and 80 cents playing "cinch" with three of us. He was green enough hunting, but he seemed to know how to play "cinch" all right. We talked a lot about the rabbit shooting around the lake, but we didn't tip off our game by any remarks about rabbits in the orchard. Then "Big Jack" says: "We'll make up a purse of five dollars for the fellow that gets the first rabbit," and everyone agreed to it and chipped in 50 cents apiece.

When we got to the station Old Man Carmody met us, and when we asked him about rabbits the old man says: "Slathers of 'em. I see 'em playin' 'round the yard on moonlight nights, and they're gnawin' at the old cabbage left in the garden an' chasin' each other in the orchard. You'll have fine sport to-morrow; there hasn't been a gun fired at 'em yet." Well, of course this was a grand "steer" for Wilbur, and gave him an idea that there were rabbits by the million in the country, and he wanted to get his gun out of the case and

THE PART HE PREFERRED.

Subtle Meaning in Poet's Criticism of Decollete Costume.

Joaquin Miller, the poet of the Sierras, is something of a recluse and rarely comes into San Francisco, but when he does, he is made a good deal of a lion. On his last visit he was one of the guests at a rather formal dinner at a friend's house where he stayed overnight. His hostess had known the poet since her childhood, so she felt privileged, next morning, to discourse to him of the beauties of the Parisian gown she had worn the night before—beauties which seemed to have escaped his observation.

Mr. Miller listened to all that she had to say and remained silent.

"And didn't you really like the dress?" pleaded the lady.

"Well," replied the poet, "I did like part of it, well enough."

The lady brightened.

"Indeed?" she said. "What part?"

"The part you don't see," answered the poet; and that ended the discussion. —Lippincott's.

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FRANK J. CHENEY. Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 5th day of December, A. D. 1898.

A. W. GLEASON, Notary Public.

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